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# ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY



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## 1. Introduction

At Golborne Community Primary School, we strive to maximise each child's attendance as we can only directly influence a child's education if they are in school.

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential to enable all pupils to gain the maximum benefit from the opportunities provided throughout their education. Improving attendance and punctuality is a vital element of school improvement and as research indicates, positively impacts on the levels of achievement of pupils.

'It is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. The pupils with highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.' Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, August 2024), the Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance (2024), Children Missing Education guidance, and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

### **The government expects schools and local authorities to:**

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parent/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

### **In response to this we aim to:**

- Create a strong culture of high attendance and punctuality throughout the whole school.
- Have high expectations for every pupil's attendance at school.
- To establish and sustain improved levels of attendance above 96%.
- To set expectations about attendance from the outset – School Nursery onwards.
- To explain to pupils and parents/carers why good attendance is important and how it helps pupils achieve.
- To listen to parents/carers to find out why their children are not attending well enough and act accordingly.
- To challenge parents/carers, who do not make sure that their children attend but also offer support when needed.
- To ensure that registers are completed accurately, consistently and reliably and that analysis of attendance data is used to provide an effective monitoring system and to inform practice and target resources.
- To identify pupils and groups of pupils whose absence or lateness is giving cause for concern and target resources to work toward the resolution of any difficulties being experienced.
- To reduce the percentage of persistent absentees (attendance 90% and below).
- To promote an effective whole-school approach to the management of attendance where each member of the school community, including staff, governors, parents/carers and pupils, is aware of their roles and responsibilities and makes an effective contribution.
- To make attendance 'everyone's business' in school and to understand the relationship between attendance, curriculum, ethos, behaviour and inclusivity.
- To establish working partnerships with parents/carers, other support agencies and the wider community to address attendance issues.
- To ensure that policy and procedures on attendance and punctuality are always effective and applied consistently in practice.

## 2. Senior Attendance Champion (SAC)

The Senior Attendance Champion for the school is Mr. D. Hutton, Assistant Headteacher. Mr. Hutton holds strategic responsibility for leading, monitoring, and evaluating all aspects of attendance, ensuring that whole-school systems align with statutory guidance and best practice. He oversees the analysis of attendance data, identifies patterns and emerging concerns, and ensures targeted interventions are implemented and reviewed for impact. As SAC, he meets regularly with the Local Authority and external support partners to review cases, coordinate support, and contribute to wider attendance strategies. He ensures that attendance remains a priority across the school by reporting to governors, supporting staff training, and driving a culture where good attendance is actively promoted and barriers are addressed promptly and effectively.

## 3. Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

At Golborne Community Primary School, we aim to promote and reward good attendance and punctuality in a positive way, through the following systems:

- Accurate, consistent registration and prompt follow up
- Praise from all staff for good/improved attendance
- Welcoming poor attenders back into class in a positive manner
- Involving and informing parents/carers of measures to improve attendance and celebrations of success e.g. letter home, newsletter
- Class attendance figures for the whole phase are shared weekly during class assemblies. The class with the highest attendance will receive an extra break time on a Friday afternoon
- Gold, Silver and Bronze certificates handed out in assembly at the end of each term (Autumn/Spring/Summer) to celebrate children who have achieved 100% at each point.

All communication with families will follow DfE best practice, including personalised, timely messages using data specific to the child and avoiding judgemental language, in line with the DfE Toolkit for Communicating with Families (2023).

## 4. School Procedures

Teachers are required by law to take an attendance register twice a day – once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon.

Staff and pupils should regard registrations as an integral part of the school day and an opportunity to greet each other in a polite and appropriate manner.

We ask that parents/carers ensure their children arrive on time for registration.

Where children are late or absent, a good and honest explanation must be offered by the parent/carer. Only a school can authorise an absence. If your child is ill or cannot go to school for some reason, you need to contact the school by telephone no later than 9.15am. You can also e-mail school if preferred at: [enquiries@admin.golborneprimary.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@admin.golborneprimary.wigan.sch.uk). The school will then decide whether to authorise the absence.

If no contact is made by parents/carers, the school office will make first response phone calls home for each day a child is absent from school, these will be logged.

**Please be aware that when a parent/carer telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result, the absence may be unauthorised.**

Keeping your child off school with minor ailment, e.g. slight cold, is not acceptable. Parents/carers should consult NHS guidance ("Is My Child Too Ill for School?") when deciding whether a pupil is well enough to attend.

Where a pupil has repeated illness-related absences, the school may request appropriate medical evidence. In line with DfE guidance, evidence will not be insisted upon where it would incur a cost or require a GP appointment unless strictly necessary.

There are only a few valid reasons why your child should be absent. If your child has been away from school without you giving any reason, the school will contact you to find out why. This may be by phone call, email, letter or an invitation to a meeting in school. If we cannot get a reason or gain contact with you, this will be marked down as an unauthorised absence and is also a safeguarding concern. A home visit may take place if we feel this is necessary, and/or we may request an official Police Welfare check. Please ensure your contact details are always up to date to avoid this situation.

Where absence is unexplained, repeated or prolonged, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will review the case and consider whether the pattern may indicate unmet needs, neglect or other safeguarding concerns, in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

In cases where punctuality or absence is a concern, we look to work in partnership with parents/carers to identify reasons for the poor attendance and to support the family until attendance improves.

### **Our expectations for your children:**

- All children should attend school every day unless they are genuinely unwell.
- Our school target for attendance is 96% or above for every child.
- Children should arrive on time every day, ready to learn when lessons begin.

### **Stages of support**

Our aim is always to work in partnership with families to remove barriers to attendance. If a child's attendance or punctuality becomes a concern, the following stages will take place:

#### **1. Initial Monitoring and Communication**

- If attendance falls below 96%, parents/carers will receive a letter highlighting their child's current attendance level, although we will consider individual circumstances and historical attendance at this point.
- We will contact you by phone or email to discuss any patterns of absence or lateness.

#### **2. Early Help Support**

- If attendance falls below 90% (known as Persistent Absence or PA), or if punctuality becomes a recurring issue, a meeting will be arranged in school to discuss ways we can help.
- An Attendance and Punctuality Action Plan will be introduced with agreed targets.
- Where wider needs are identified, the school will consider completing an Early Help Assessment or contributing to an existing multi-agency plan.

#### **3. Further Intervention**

- Continued absence or lateness will lead to further meetings and possible home visits.
- The school may request medical evidence for ongoing illness-related absences.

#### **4. Formal Involvement**

- If attendance remains below 90% despite support, the school will discuss the case at the statutory Targeting Support Meeting with the Local Authority. The LA may initiate legal intervention under the National Framework for Penalty Notices (2024) where support has not been effective or has not been engaged with.

If a medical absence is likely to be ongoing or long term, we will offer support in accordance with the school's and Local Authority's policies relating to children with health needs. As a school we need to plan how children can access education during periods of long-term absence and how and when the child will return to school. School will make reasonable adjustments for pupils where necessary and appropriate.

As a school we will adhere to the Local Authority policy [Education of pupils with medical needs \(wigan.gov.uk\)](http://wigan.gov.uk) This policy includes a graduated response, supporting inclusive practice across all settings to ensure children's continued links to their education provider when their health needs may impact their access to education.

## 5. Persistent Absence (PA)

Persistent absence is when a pupil's overall absence equates to 10 per cent or more of their possible sessions. In response to this and to prevent pupils from falling into this category, the school's Attendance and Punctuality manager tracks and monitors pupil's attendance on a weekly basis. Pupils are closely monitored and appropriate interventions will be made. This could include letters, phone calls, home visits and meetings in school.

## 6. The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

Section 444 (1)and(1A) state;

(1)If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.

(1A) If in the circumstances mentioned in subsection (1) the parent knows that his child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails without reasonable justification to cause him to do so, he is guilty of an offence

The Supreme Court has given its judgment on the meaning of what is meant by "attend regularly" at school for the purposes of section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The Supreme Court decided that "regularly" meant in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school" - April 2017.

## 7. Part-Time Timetables

The use of reduced or part-time timetable for children in our setting, is not something our ethos supports or DfE guidelines. However, through discussions with the relevant professionals and class teachers, this may be something we can consider, only under exceptional circumstances. This is extremely rare, as every child is entitled to a full-time education. Any reduced timetable must only be used on a temporary, time-limited basis, never as a behaviour sanction. A written, reviewed plan must be agreed with parents, outlining support and a clear date for return to full-time provision, in line with DfE guidance (WTISA 2024).

Where it is considered necessary to implement a part-time timetable for a child in the setting, there would be an initial consultation meeting with parents/carers, Mr Hunt (Headteacher), Mrs Baxter (SENDCO) and the class teacher to discuss the plans. The plan will then be reviewed on a fortnightly basis, with parents/carers and the school, to look at all possibilities of increasing the child's access to full - time education.

## 8. Safeguarding and the Law

Attendance concerns are safeguarding concerns. The DSL will monitor repeated absence, patterns of absence, or sudden changes in attendance. Where appropriate, the school will consider Early Help thresholds or make a referral to children's social care under section 17 or section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for each child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and safety
- Access to the curriculum
- Anti Bullying

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires governing bodies of maintained schools and FE colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children - Working Together to Safeguard Children September 2025.

Where a pupil is known to the Youth Offending Team (YOT), the school will inform the named YOT worker of any unexplained absence, as required in the updated DfE guidance (WTISA, 2024).

## 9. Expectations and procedures for the Early Years

At Golborne Community Primary School all children under the age 5 are included and expected to follow the school attendance and punctuality policy. Regular attendance and punctuality for under 5s is essential if children are to achieve their full potential and build solid foundations for a successful learning journey throughout school.

We expect pupils who are under 5 and have a place at Golborne Community Primary School to attend on a regular basis.

If a child's attendance or punctuality falls below the school target of 96% and the school has not received any reasonable explanation from parents/carers regarding their child's absence, normal school attendance procedures and interventions will follow.

## 10. Punctuality

Lateness can be very disruptive both for the child who is late and for his/her peers. It impacts on both their social interaction and learning. When a child arrives late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson, this can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of their academic ability.

Please see table below showing each year group's drop off, start time and collection times. The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at **the below start times for each year group**. Any pupil arriving at school after their class's start time will need to come into school via the main entrance where Mrs Morris will be conducting a daily late gate.

## Timetable – Staggered Timings

### Drop Off and Pick Up Arrangements

	Early Years	Key Stage 1	Lower Key Stage 2	Upper Key Stage 2
<b>Entry Point</b>	School Nursery – School Nursery Gates  Reception Main Gate	<b>Main Gate</b>		
<b>Entrance Door (for drop off)</b>	School Nursery – School Nursery Doors  Reception – Reception Gate	Year 1B Classroom Door  Year 1E Classroom Door  Year 2F Classroom Door  Year 2H Classroom Door	Year 3 Classroom Door  Year 4/3 Classroom Door  Year 4 Classroom Door	Year 5H Classroom Door  Year 5B Classroom Door  Year 6B Classroom Door  Year 6W Classroom Door
<b>School Start Time</b>	8.30 am	8.35 am	8.40 am	8.40 am
<b>School Finish Time</b>	3.00 pm	3.05 pm	3.10 pm	3.10 pm

- **School Nursery Timings:** Morning Sessions: 8.30am- 11.30am; Afternoon Sessions: 12.00pm- 3.00pm.

Entries into school up to 30 minutes after each class's start times, will be recorded by Mrs Morris and marked in the register as 'Late' (L). Pupils at Golborne Community Primary School are expected to arrive on time every day. In order to achieve this, pupils' punctuality will be tracked by number of sessions late and monitored on a weekly basis. Any pupil who arrives late on a regular basis, will be followed up with the appropriate intervention. This could include letters, phone calls, home visits and meetings in school.

Pupils arriving more than 30 minutes after their classes start time, will be marked in the registers as an 'unauthorised late' (U). Unauthorised lates are classed as an absence and could result in an Education Penalty Notice.

### 11. Requests for Leave of Absence and Holidays in Term Time

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions in order for them to achieve their maximum potential. We strongly discourage parents/carers from arranging any holiday or absence during term time as they are not in the best interests of the child.

In accordance with DfE regulations, school is unable to grant leave of absence for pupils unless there are exceptional circumstances. Applications for leave of absence must be made in advance. School must be satisfied that circumstances warrant the leave of absence. Leave of absence is granted at the Head teacher's discretion. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. Where the leave of absence is not granted and therefore unauthorised, (code G) action may be taken by referral to Wigan council Attendance Team which could result in an Education Penalty Notice being issued.

Attendance data will be shared daily with the Department for Education, as required by the Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

## 12. Education Penalty Notices (EPN)

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced new powers for designated Local Officers, Headteachers and the Police to issue Education Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004. These were updated by the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Education Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

School will issue an Education Penalty Notice Warning to each parent at the beginning of the academic year and then subsequently each term. For any mid-year admissions to the school, all parents/carers will receive the Education Penalty Notice Warning as part of their intake meeting.

For the purposes of the protocol, the legal definitions of 'parent' are:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not.
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

A separate Education Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent for every child who is not attending school.

School will complete an Education Penalty Notice request form if a child falls within one or more of these categories within a 10-week period:

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence
- persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration

Parents/carers may also receive an Education Penalty Notice for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance under the following circumstances:

- Your child is stopped on a truancy sweep
- You fail to ensure that your child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

### **12.1. Payment of Penalty Notices**

The payment of an Education Penalty Notice will be £80 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 to be paid within 28 days.

### **12.2. Non-payment of Education Penalty Notices**

If payment is not received within 28 days, the Local Authority will consider prosecution for the unauthorised absence to which the Education Penalty Notice relates.

Non-payment of an Education Penalty Notice may result in legal action being taken by the Local Authority. These actions will be considered where a significant improvement of school attendance is not apparent.

The instigation of legal proceedings for unauthorised absence from school under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 may also be considered where it is deemed to be appropriate.

## **13.Children Missing Education (Statutory Requirements)**

“Children going missing from school, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future” ‘Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities August 2024’.

Maintained schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Further information about schools’ safeguarding responsibilities can be found in the ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory Guidance September 2025’.

School’s responsibilities include:

Ensuring that all pupils are entered on to the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child’s whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

All pupils’ attendance is monitored through their daily register. If a pupil fails to attend regular or have missed 10 school days without permission, school will take the necessary steps in ascertaining the child’s whereabouts before contacting the local authority to investigate further.

Attendance is monitored closely and poor or irregular attendance is addressed at the earliest opportunity. Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

School will also arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion. This information can be found in the ‘Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England Statutory Guidance’.

Golborne Community Primary School refers to the ‘Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities’ and follows the ‘Wigan Council Children Missing Protocol’ June 2023, should such cases arise.

The school will follow the statutory Children Missing Education guidance.

A CME referral to the Local Authority will be made immediately where:

- a pupil has 10 consecutive days of unexplained absence
- the family cannot be contacted
- there are safeguarding concerns
- the family has moved without providing a new address
- statutory deletion criteria may apply (Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2024).

The school will not remove a pupil from roll unless one of the authorised deletion grounds is met.

### **13.1. Missing Child procedure**

Golborne Community Primary school takes the safety of every child very seriously and will take every precaution necessary to ensure that the children in their care do not leave a session unaccompanied. In the unlikely event that a child is noted to be missing from school premises, the school will put into practice the below agreed procedures.

If, in the event a member of staff is not able to account for a child's whereabouts, the following action will be taken:

During the school day:

- Class teacher to retake the register to confirm all children are present.
- Class teacher to remain with the other children in class, LSA (if no LSA in class, teacher to send a responsible child to locate another member of staff to come and support).
- LSA/staff member to notify school office and the Headteacher (DSL) and all to immediately check toilets, shared areas, rooms and playground to ensure the child is not hiding or locked in anywhere. Office Manager to check if the child has been signed out.
- If after no more than 10 minutes the child is not located, the school office to contact the police and parents/carers with parental responsibility. At this point, school will support the police who will now lead the response to this incident. The Headteacher and Senior Leadership will liaise with emergency services and parents/carers.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads or School Office staff request the rest of the school retake their class registers to ensure all other children are accounted for and remain in the morning classrooms.

We recognise that during the time a child is missing, however briefly, all involved, parents/carers and others suffer great fear, guilt and distress. It is not always easy to control all these emotions when the child is found. We will accept that it is important to remember:

- That the child also might have been afraid and distressed and might now be in need of comfort.
- Remain calm, reassure the child and acknowledge it is not the child's fault.
- Ensure the child is not hurt.
- That the incident provides a good opportunity to talk to all the children to ensure that they understand that they must not leave the premises, and why.
- The Headteacher/Principal Deputy Head should communicate the incident to the appropriate Local Authority.
- A written record of the incident and any action taken should be made and recorded on the child's record on CPOMS, the system the school uses to record safeguarding concerns and all staff involved should input any relevant information; including conversations with parents/carers, police, the Local Authority and any other person they feel has contributed to the collection of evidence.

- The Senior Leadership Team will conduct an internal investigation to establish how the situation occurred, how effective was the response and whether action could be taken to ensure it does not happen again. This information will also be recorded on the child's CPOMS log.

## 14. Early Help

Attendance concerns will always be considered within the wider context of family needs. Staff will seek to understand barriers and support the family through multi-agency work. Where thresholds for Early Help are met, the school may lead or contribute to an Early Help plan, ensuring attendance targets form part of the agreed actions.

“Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early help can also prevent further problems arising; for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care, or in families where there are emerging parental mental health issues or drug and alcohol misuse”. ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children December 2023’.

As stated above, intervening Early can be critical to achieving positive outcomes for children. The Children Act (2004) also states our Statutory Duty to co-operate, it emphasises the need for Local Authorities and relevant partners to work together to meet children's needs. Early Help Assessment is Wigan's response to this statutory duty to co-operate and it replaces the CAF process.

Wigan Early Help Hub (EHH) is responsible for monitoring and promotion of the Early Help Framework on behalf of Wigan Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB). All children and young people should have their needs assessed holistically and if receiving support over and above the universal provision, this is to be recorded and coordinated using the Early Help

Framework. This is detailed with the ‘Wigan Safeguarding Children Board Threshold of Need Document’ and can be found on the Wigan council website.

The Early Help process allows professionals to work with families to identify children's needs at a very early stage. It is designed to draw out the strengths and areas for development within a family. Following an assessment, an action plan is developed then reviewed on a regular basis until outcomes have been achieved.

Golborne Community Primary School will use the Early Help process where a family needs a further support plan following initial intervention. We may also refer to Wigan Hub Team or Attendance Team or Police Welfare Check, for additional targeted support.

For further information on Early Help please see ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children December 2023 DfE’.

## 15. Review

**Reviewed:** November 2025

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where statutory guidance changes (e.g., updated DfE attendance, safeguarding or CME requirements).

**Reviewed by:** Mrs Morris (Attendance, Communications & Administrations Officer), Mr Hutton (Assistant Headteacher and Attendance Lead), Simon Wetten (Lead Attendance Worker, Wigan Council) and Mrs Stott (Attendance School Governor).

**Next review date:** September 2026